/253 cont./

559 548 with respect to social questions as fundamental as marriage, there has been a change in the judgment of prostitution and concubinage, two ways by which a woman escapes from legal strictures, almost always because of necessity or the special circumstances in which her group is placed.

X

559 542 888 We should note here the important fact that the functions ascribed to the working Guajiro woman no longer count when she has passed through her adult change of life, that is to say, when she has passed the menopause. From this moment it appears that she enjoys absolute freedom within the community to do those things that are prohibited a woman before she reaches that condition, such as to become inebriated, to smoke, to indulge in sexual liberties; certain taboos now no longer refer to her, and the cultural patterns need not be so rigorously complied with; she is not obliged to become the wife of the heirs of the dead husband, etc. Her status again becomes effective with all its attached functions after her death, as we shall see.

XI

559 769 775 The active presence of an individual in Guajiro society is not lost at his death. In the concept that these natives have about death, clearly expressed in the study made by my husband to which we have /254/ made reference several times, every member of the community continues being a member of it and exercises influence over his fellow men after his death. His status in the afterlife is determined by the same conditions that he had during his earthly life: the acquiring of greater wealth and of prestige confers a higher status in the world of the spirits.

[58 cont.]

755 expert in these sicknesses and who devote themselves to applying the remedies and divining the causes of such illnesses indicate by what bird the fruit which the mother ate was contaminated. Once the origin of the sickness has been determined, they proceed to carry out the method of cure which entails hunting and capturing the bird responsible, which, once killed, is roasted, and the meat fed to the child. A sancocho [stew] is also prepared, using portions of the bird, a good part of which is fed to the child. With this medicine the infant should be quickly cured. If this does not effect a cure, the divination has been incorrectly made, and it was not that kind of bird that pecked at the fruit eaten by the mother during her pregnancy. The whole process must therefore be done over again to discover with absolute certainty what animal caused the child's sickness.

843 753 If a pregnant woman should eat the meat of a hen that has been killed by a sparrow hawk, the child will be born sickly, his excretions will be green, and his crying will be like the cry of a hawk. When they do not know the origin of the sickness, they 755 apply home remedies or those of any local curer [curandero]. If [757] these do not bring about the desired effect, then they must turn to divination. The diviner will decide that the mother ate the flesh of a chicken that had been killed by a sparrow hawk. The curing method will follow a similar process to that previously noted: a hawk is found and killed; a leg of the creature is taken, and the bone is well cleaned and allowed to dry. When it is sufficiently dry it is boiled, and the child's body bathed with the resulting infusion.

262 825 842 The meat of such a hen – contaminated by the hawk which had eaten some of it – is also harmful to children in general, boys and girls, and also adults. Every time it is eaten it causes sterility. For this reason the magic taboo on this meat is lifted only for the old and the very aged who have already lost their procreative powers and in consequence have nothing to fear in this respect.

766 Household medicine. This system of medicine, which, as we have said, is independent of shamans and diviners, is based above all on the practice of certain magic practices directly